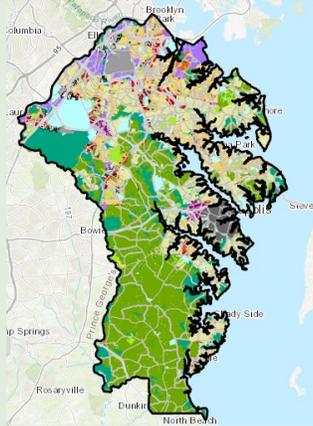




Growth Action Network

of Anne Arundel County, Inc.

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First draft of Plan2040 must be reviewed by November 15

November 6, 2020

The Plan2040 draft needs citizen review

The draft plan has many good policies, but also many omissions.

The comment period for the first draft of the new GDP, Plan2040, will close on November 15. The draft plan can be read and downloaded from the [Plan2040 webpage](#). It is packaged in two volumes, with the second volume containing background information. The Plan overview together with its goals and policies are covered in the first 60 pages of Volume I. It is important that all GAN members and guests take time to review the goals and policies and comment to the County through the linked webpage.

Plan2040 is intended to be a guidance document with which subsequent policies, plans, and regulations must be consistent. The draft plan contains many good policies. However, there are several inappropriate policies and omissions that need correction. **In the following paragraphs, we will suggest several issues that warrant attention.**

Lack of growth limits. Plan2040 relies on the Smart Growth concept to specify that new development should occur at town centers, transportation centers and designated redevelopment areas, but it is totally mute on how much or what kind of development should occur. Citizens in many areas feel that there has been too much development that has happened too quickly. However, there is nothing in the plan about determining growth limits, description of avenues for community involvement in growth rate decisions or identification of tools for community control of rate of growth for various types of development.

Holding capacity. The plan projects growth of 50,000 citizens or 29,000 housing units by 2040, but OPZ has stated that holding capacity with current zoning is only 13,488 units. It appears that dramatic rezoning in targeted growth areas will need to occur, but no effort has been made to assess practical holding capacity in these areas. Targeting of town centers for future growth should not be done without coordination with town center planning.

Regional growth management. The CE has recently suggested that excess market

demand for growth be redirected toward Baltimore, since the city would like more growth and AA County is expected to have an excess. If this is a viable alternative, it should be covered with appropriate policies In Plan2040.

Affordable housing. The need for low-income and workforce housing in the County is acknowledged in the plan, but it lacks guidance on where it should be located. This has been one of the largest problem issues encountered in recent attempts at legislation. Redevelopment areas and town and transportation centers seem to be attractive options, but policies should be included that specify target development rates and locations.

Economic development resources. Goal HE1 states that we want to provide opportunities for all County residents, but the plan later states that we should promote development near Ft. Meade. This area is likely to experience development pressure far in excess of the desires of local communities, and further promotion is not needed. Furthermore, new jobs at Ft. Meade are likely to be white-collar government contractors who frequently do not reside in the area for more than a few years. Ft Meade should not be allowed to become the tail that wags the AACo dog.

County development resources would be best spent attracting jobs and housing for current county residents and in promoting redevelopment and revitalization of areas in need of it. It should be noted that more than 40% of current jobs are of the blue-collar type and more than 80% of employment in the county is provided by business with less than 9 employees.

Resource allocation that localizes benefits. Use of incentives to encourage development of affordable housing should require assurance that housing residents will be currently employed or residing in the County. Likewise, taxpayers should have assurance that jobs and other benefits of economic development activity will be primarily directed toward current county residents.

Regional Planning details. Since the Plan2040 document is presented as guidance rather than regulation, the Regional Planning process will have to consider and propose regulation of local zoning, type and rate of development, environmental preservation, school capacity, and traffic. A thorough description of the Regional Planning process, plan content, and implementation mechanisms, however, is not provided. Consequently, it remains difficult to evaluate the utility of Plan2040.

Interim rezoning. The proposed Regional Planning schedule suggest that plans for nine regions will not all be completed before 2025, and the stage seems to be set for a parade of piecemeal rezoning bills to be presented to the County Council over the next several years. Since the Land Use map will have been approved much earlier and zoning must be consistent with it, the Land Use map will effectively become the new zoning map in the interim.

RP Committee composition. Composition of the Regional Planning Committees will be all-important in determining the content of the Regional Plans. The proposed committee structure appears to be over weighted with developers, brokers, and others representing commercial interests. The county has more than 10 times more employees than businesses, suggesting the business community is a small fraction of total residents. Commercial interests should be restricted to no more than 2 representatives on a RP Committee.

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